

Message Text

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AMCONSUL DOUALA VIA POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EGEN, SGEN, CM

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT AHIDJO ADDRESSES NATIONAL PARTY COUNCIL

REF: YAOUNDE 3889

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S OPENING ADDRESS TO NATIONAL PARTY COUNCIL NOVEMBER 25 WAS WELL-ELABORATED BROAD RECAPITULATION OF GURC POLICY WHICH CONTAINED LITTLE NEW BUT LAID MORE STRESS THAN IN PAST ON GOAL OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND CAMEROONIAN CONTROL OVER OWN INSTITUTIONS. AHIDJO SHOWED USUAL SKILL IN BALANCING (1) ARTICULATION OF RECENTLY VIGOROUSLY PURSUED POLICY OF INCREASING PACE OF CAMEROONIANIZATION AND ENACTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS TO RESTRUCTURE INSTITUTIONS WITH (2) TESTIMONY TO IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND STATE-TO-STATE COOPERATION WITH FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT AHIDJO OPENED THREE-DAY ANNUAL SESSION OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF UNION NATIONALE CAMEROUNAISE (UNC) ON NOVEMBER 25 WITH HOUR AND HALF STATE-OF-UNION SPEECH WHICH WAS MAINLY EXCELLENT SUMMARY OF GURC POLICY, RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS,
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AND PLANS IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY. SPEECH TOUCHED ONLY

LIGHTLY ON FOREIGN POLICY.

3. AMONG MORE NOTEWORTHY ASPECTS OF SPEECH:

(A) AHIDJO SPELLED OUT MORE EXPLICITLY THAN PREVIOUSLY GURC'S BELIEF IN IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR. HE STRESSED INABILITY OF PUBLIC SECTOR TO ABSORB SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF YOUTH, ESPECIALLY EDUCATED YOUTH, AND RECITED GURC EFFORTS TO ATTRACT THEM TO PRIVATE SECTOR BY REGULATIONS WHICH TEND GIVE PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES SAME ADVANTAGES AS THOSE ENJOYED BY PUBLIC SECTOR (FAMILY ALLOWANCES, MEDICAL CARE, SOON-TO-BE INAUGURATED RETIREMENT AND DISABILITY BENEFITS, MINIMUM SALARIES FOR VARIOUS JOB CATEGORIES, SALARY INCREASES). HE ASSURED LISTENERS THAT GURC WOULD TURN NEITHER TO RIGHT NOR LEFT, BUT RATHER CONTINUE ASSIDUOUSLY TO FOLLOW POLICY OF "PLANNED LIBERALISM" WHICH GIVE PRIVILEGED PLACE TO PRIVATE INITIATIVE, RECOGNIZES LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND ENCOURAGES FAIR RETURN FOR ITS ACTIVITIES, ALL WHILE GOVERNMENT RETAINS POWER TO ORIENT AND CONTROL SO AS TO ASSURE PRIMACY OF NATIONAL INTEREST.

(B) AHIDJO SUMMED UP RECENT GURC MEASURES IN BANKING AND INSURANCE SECTORS TO REGULATE CREDIT FACILITIES SO AS BETTER TO ADAPT THEM TO CAMEROONIAN NEEDS. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO MERGE, THE THREE COMPANIES PRESENTLY PRODUCING AND DISTRIBUTING ELECTRICITY IN CAMEROON INTO SINGLE NATIONAL COMPANY WITH CLEAR MAJORITY GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP. (COMMENT: THIS IS MORE A MOVE TOWARD RATIONALIZATION AND EFFICIENCY THAN TOWARD NATIONALIZATION. GURC ALREADY OWNS 40 PERCENT OF POWER PRODUCTION COMPANY AND SLIGHTLY OVER 50 PERCENT OF DISTRIBUTION COMPANY IN FORMER EAST CAMEROON--WITH FRENCH CAISSE CENTRALE OTHER MAJOR SHAREHOLDER IN EACH--AND 100 PERCENT OF SOLE COMPANY PRODUCING AND DISTRIBUTING ELECTRICITY IN FORMER WEST CAMEROON.)

(C) AHIDJO IMPLICITLY CRITICIZED NATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION, (UNTC) WHICH WAS FORMED BY AMALGAMATING THE SEVERAL SEPARATE UNIONS IN WOUQ AND DEPRIVED OF ALL INDEPENDENT STATUS BY BEING FOLDED INTO UNC. (THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT REPORTS OF MANIFESTATIONS OF RESTIVENESS ABOUT RISING PRICES AMONG SOME UNTC LEADERS.) HE SPECIFICALLY REMINDED UNTC OF ITS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBSERVIENCE TO UNC AND ITS OBLIGATION TO HELP GOVERNMENT MAINTAIN SOCIAL TRANQUILITY. AND IN ONE PARTICULARLY POINTED SENTENCE, HE STATED: "TRADE UNIONISM IN CAMEROON IS THE EXPRESSION OF ONLY A VERY LIMITED CATEGORY OF SOCIETY, AND A PRIVILEGED ONE IN MANY RESPECTS."

(D) FAILING TO COVER USUAL WATERFRONT ON FOREIGN POLICY, AHIDJO CONCENTRATED MARKEDLY ON FRANCE AND FRANCOPHONIA:

(1) RE FRANCO-CAMEROONIAN COOPERATION AGREEMENTS (NEGOTIATIONS

ON WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO RESUME NOVEMBER 29 OR 30) AHIDJO SPOKE IN STRONGER AND SHARPER TERMS THAN PREVIOUSLY. HE MADE THE POINT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PUBLIC-- SINCE PLAYED UP IN LOCAL MEDIA TREATMENT-- THAT CAMEROON HAD FORMALLY "DENOUNCED" 1960 ACCORDS IN ORDER TO RECORD UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT IN CAMEROONIAN MIND NEGOTIATIONS WERE NOT QUESTION OF SIMPLY REVISING EXISTING AGREEMENTS. HE ADDED THAT FIRST PHASE OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ADJOURNED LAST MONTH IN PARIS WERE NOT EASY AND THAT NUMEROUS IMPORTANT POINTS REMAINED UNRESOLVED. DK (2) RE OCAM, AHIDJO REITERATED CAMEROON'S PREVIOUSLY STATED REASONS FOR QUITTING THAT ORGANIZATION LAST JULY, BUT RESTRESSED CAMEROON'S INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE NORMALLY WITH OCAM MEMBER COUNTRIES. HE ALSO STATED CLEARLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT CAMEROON WOULD CONTINUE, IF POSSIBLE, TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES OF THOSE OCAM SPECIALIZED AGENCIES WHICH STILL APPEAR USEFUL.

(3) RE NOVEMBER 13 PARIS CONFERENCE OF FRANC ZONE STATES, AHIDJO SPECIFIED THAT CAMEROON HAD REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE NOT ONLY BECAUSE CONFERENCE APPEARED TO LACK REAL INTEREST TO THE COUNTRY, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT WAS "CONTRARY TO THE NEEDS OF AFFIRMING CAMEROON'S NATIONAL PERSONALITY IN THE WORLD." (COMMENT: REMARKS RE FRANC ZONE CONFERENCE AND WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM DREW LOUDEST APPLAUSE FROM AUDIENCE.)

4. EMBASSY TRANSMITTING FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH BY AIRGRAM. YAOUNDE 3889 REPORTS ON UNC NATIONAL COUNCIL AS WHOLE.

5. COMMENT: BESIDES BEING GOOD SUMMARY OF GURC POLICY, AHIDJO'S SPEECH ALSO ILLUSTRATES SUPERB BALANCE WITH WHICH AHIDJO SPEAKS AND ACTS. ESSENTIALLY IT ACCURATELY PORTRAYS DIRECTION IN WHICH GURC MARCHING STEADFASTLY OF LATE TO GEAR UP GOVERNMENT REGULATORY MECHANISMS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INSTALL MORE CAMEROONIANS IN KEY POSITIONS SO AS TO PUT FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS TO WORK IN MANNER CALCULATED BETTER TO BENEFIT CAMEROONIANS, INCLUDING RURAL MASSES AND URBAN POOR. AT SAME TIME, AHIDJO KEEPS SIGHT OF INDISPENSAB
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